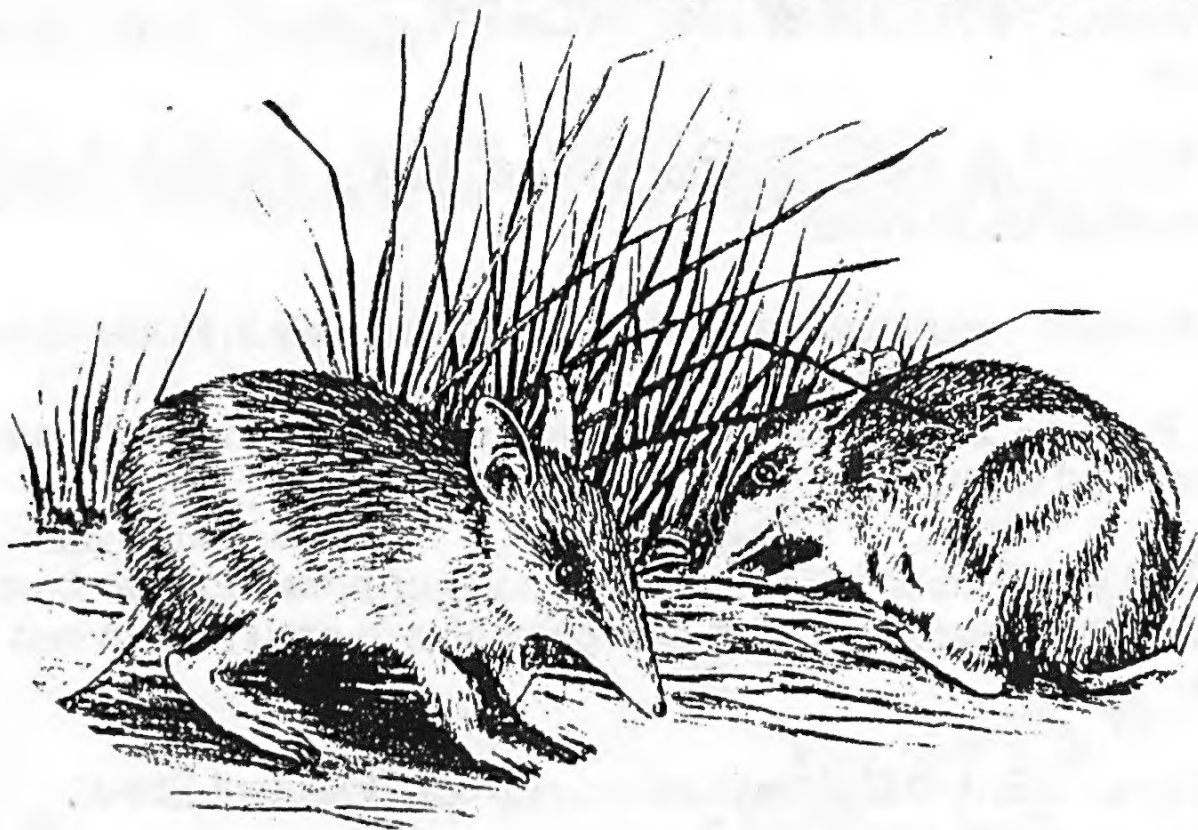


Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat Incorporated

SEPTEMBER 1997

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting:** Sep 5 Mr A Merrick: Eastern Barred Bandicoot
Meeting: Oct 3 FNCB Members: Study / Workshop: A
selection of special interest topics
Excursion: Sep 7 Creswick State Forest : Creswick FNC
Excursion: Oct 5 Victoria Park, Ballarat: Study of the
remnant grassland habitat within the park
Miss Helen Burgess (half day excursion)



President: Mr G Bluns 03 5333 2282
Secretary: Mr L Fink 03 5286 1509
Treasurer: Mr J Gregurke 03 5339 4993
Editor: Mr A Dyson 03 5341 3948

Postal Address:
PO Box 328W, Ballarat West, 3350.

Meetings are held at the Art Building,
School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard St
South, commencing at 7.30 pm.

Excursions commence from the corner of
Sturt and Armstrong Sts., Ballarat, at 9.30
am for full-day excursions or at 1.30 pm
for half-day excursions.

FIELD REPORTS

Ken McDonnell - Wood Ducks starting to nest on his property at Invermay - a pair have been looking for holes in trees.

Lyndsay Fink - magpies seen collecting sticks and twine for nest. A Wedge-tailed Eagle seen at Woodburne Creek. Lyndsay brought along a nest of the European Wasp that had been found in a rabbit burrow near the rubbish tip at Meredith. The tip would have been a handy place to pick up material for the nest such as paper and cloth. (Frank Harrap noted that the pest exterminators spend most of their time dealing with nests of the European Wasps these days).

Maureen Christie - Eastern Rosellas and Eastern Spinebills seen in Hotham Street.

Alan Morrison - 9 Hardheads seen on Lake Wendouree - in full breeding plumage.

Frank Harrap - his first sighting for about 6 years of a Swamp Wallaby in Shire Avenue Mount Helen.

Helen Burgess - a kookaburra visiting her garden daily in Moola Street.

Roger Purcell - 2 or 3 pairs of a family of Crested Pigeons near the Midlands Golf Course.

Brian Andrews - commented on the change of brown to blue breeding plumage of the Blue Wren - this change seems to occur within less than a week.

Greg Binns - a Brown Goshawk seen flying over Pleasant Street.



DIARY DATES

17 September (Wednesday) - excursion to Yarrowee Creek, Nerrina Wetland and Walking Trail. Meet at Creswick Plaza Carpark, Creswick Road side at 10 am.

20 - 21 September - Angair Inc. Wildflower Show and Botanical Art Show at the Anglesea Hall, McMillan St. 10 am to 5.30 pm (10am to 5 pm on the 21st) Information: 03 5263 2787

24 September (Wednesday) - Committee Meeting at 12 Pleasant St Sth (Greg Binns) at 7.30 pm.

29 September - 5 October - VFNCA Skills Workshop at Rowsley, Brisbane Ranges. Details from Pat Murphy.

4 - 5 October - SGAP Grampians Group annual flower show, Pomonal Hall, Pomonal. 10 am to 5 pm.

17 - 19 October - WVFNCA "Campout" hosted by the Donald History and Natural History Society.

17 - 19 October - Ballarat Orchid Society Show at the Wool Pavilion, Ballarat Showgrounds. (N. B. - FNCB static display planned).

Acacia aculeatissima



MOUNT BUNINYONG RESERVE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

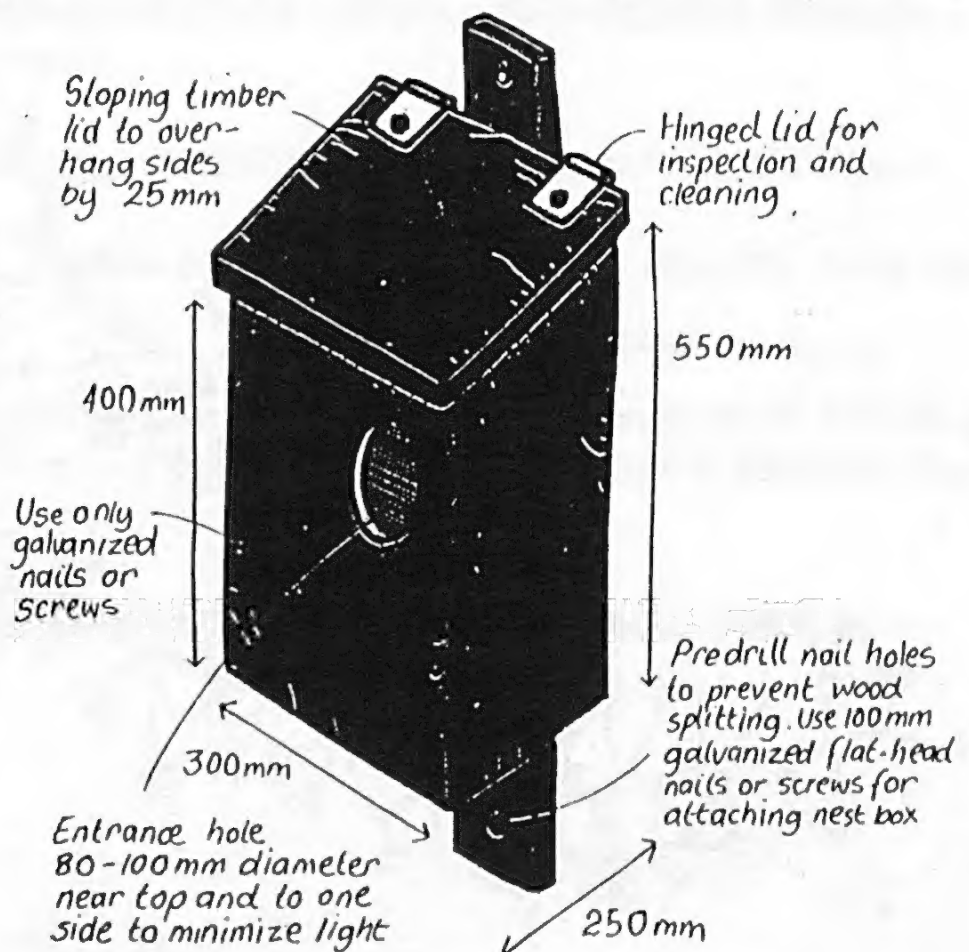
A Draft Management Plan for the Mount Buninyong Scenic Reserve (98 hectares) has been prepared by the University of Ballarat Centre for Environmental Management under the supervision of a steering committee established by the City of Ballarat. Copies of the draft are on display at Ballarat Town Hall, Robert Clark Centre - Botanical Gardens, Buninyong Post Office, Buninyong Old Library and Building 'S' (Centre for Environmental Management) at the University of Ballarat. Written submissions on the plan will be accepted until Friday 26 September by Ian Rossiter, Strategic Planning Section, City of Ballarat, PO Box 655, Ballarat 3353.

MONITORING OF EASTERN BARRED BANDICOOT

The excursion to assist with the trapping and monitoring of the bandicoots at *Mooramong*, Skipton under supervision of the officers of the Dept. of Natural Resources and Environment has yet to be finalized and the dates confirmed. Members wishing to obtain details may contact the Secretary - Lyndsay Fink (03 5286 1509) or the President Greg Binns (03 5333 2282).

Living with POSSUMS

Building a nest box



AUGUST EXCURSIONS REPORT

Excursion - 3 August.

Members were joined by Judy Johnson and Roger Purcell on an unusually warm and sunny winters morning and the decision was made to travel to Paddys Ranges State Park, south of Maryborough, to seek out flowering plants as photographic subjects. The extremely dry conditions there had delayed plant growth and whilst the conditions were balmy and most pleasant there were few plants flowering. An exception was some fine specimens of the tall greenhood (*Pterostylis longifolia*). Stops were made during progress along Daisy Hill, Lockwood, Bartlett and Possum Gully Tracks.

In the afternoon the northern area of the wildflower reserve and the newly established picnic and walking track facilities at the junction of Paddys Range Track and Reserve Track were explored.

A list of fifteen bird species was compiled, including Peaceful Dove. The only honeyeaters observed were the spectacular Yellow tufted. With the golden wattle starting to bloom, it was indeed a golden day in beautiful forest.

Living with POSSUMS

Building a nest box

Nest boxes are commercially available, or easily made from rough sawn timber. Nest boxes should be 19-25 mm thick to provide insulation. Install the box in a stable and upright position at least 3 metres above the ground. Do not use treated timber, toxic paints, chipboard or smelly glues. Make sure there are no sharp edges or protruding nails and screws.

Check the nest box regularly and remove any nesting materials left by introduced birds such as mynas, sparrows or starlings.

Like all other native animals, possums are protected under the Wildlife Act 1975. They must not be harmed in any way or kept without an authority from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.



Excursion - 22 August.

A small contingent ventured out on a cold, windy morning to visit two more of the Club's plant project sites. The first was the plot on Central Highlands Water land at Bullarook where small peppergrass (*Lepidium hyssopifolium*) was planted out in May 1993. Autumn inspections in previous years had revealed plants surviving and seeding, but at the present time no evidence of plants was to be found. The site is now infested with teasel, hemlock, dock and blackberry plants. Inspection in the summer may reveal if the *Lepidium* is able to survive through germination in these conditions.

The party moved on to St Georges Lake at Creswick for a pleasant lunch stop, then on to *Snizort* to inspect the anchor plant (*Discaria pubescens*) site on the Creswick Creek. Here the surviving plants (thirteen in the north west section and one in the south east section) have maintained their growth in spite of the dry seasons. All appeared healthy with new growth and buds in evidence. Many have developed thick, woody stems.

GWB



FLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY - Meeting August 1997

Judy Johnson, assisted by Roger Purcell spoke on this subject at our August meeting. (Please note that Roger will be the guest speaker at our *Stella Bedggood* night in November)

Judy and Roger talked, showed much of their equipment, discussed the merits and otherwise of framed and mounted photographs they had brought to the meeting, and enlarged on the topic while showing several slides later in the meeting. They have a special interest in native orchids and many of their photographs were examples of these.

Judy wears a capacious hold-all around her waist during her walks and this takes all of her photographic and other necessities. (such as sunscreen lotion, thermos, insect repellent and sunhat). She uses a 35 mm SLR camera for close-up photos and takes a macro-lens to use with it. The advantages being - it offers the best compromise between ease of use, control and image quality, it can be fitted with a variety of lenses, filters and flash equipment, and the final picture can be visualised when looking through the viewfinder (what you see is what you get). She claims there is no particular advantage of one model over another - the main thing is to know the capabilities of your own particular camera. She tends to use flash for flower photography and usually uses a 2 x teleconverter - the teleconverter both increases the optical scope of the lense collection and reduces the number of lenses to be carried. Small tripods are required for small plants and even bags of rice or equivalent make a steady support low to the ground. Judy gave many tips to the group and satisfied many queries - our thanks to Roger and herself for spending the evening with us.

IAN McCANN - "The photographer who loves nature"

There is a small article about Ian McCann in the DNRE publication *Outdoors*, No 11, Winter issue 1997. Many of us have met him at Campouts and are familiar with some of his publications such as *The Grampians in Flower*. Parks Victoria now holds the McCann collection of photographs - over 2000 original transparencies.

Swamp Rat *Rattus lutreolus*
Order Rodentia, Suborder Myomorpha, Family
Muridae

Initially described in 1841 from specimens collected over a wide area of South Eastern Australia, the swamp rat was subsequently described as 3 separate species and numerous subspecies, it is a semi aquatic animal swimming short distances mainly as means of reaching refuge when flood waters cover it's preferred habitats of riverside swamps flats and lowlying heaths, it could be described as a rodent of heath, grass and sedges.

It frequently moves about in daylight and may occur in densities as high as 15 to the Hectare. It makes tunnels through grass, sedges or heathlands and constructs nesting burrows up to a metre deep with tussock grass nests.

After 3 weeks gestation 3 to 5 naked young are born each weighing 5 G. 3 to 4 weeks later weigh 25 to 40 G. they leave the nest to become individuals in good years females may produce several litters and 3 month old females may give birth to their first litter. About 0.2 hectares appears to be the required area for both sexes to see the winter through. However in spring there is a difference, females are prepared to defend 0.5 to 4 Hectares, they need dense undergrowth, if fires are too frequent they may have to wait several years before a breeding population can exist. Grass and sedges is the main diet supplemented by insects during winter. They were once hunted by coastal Aborigines and may have been an important food.

Their status is common there are three subspecies and they should be found around Ballarat. This is the last of the Australian mammals next are the introduced

The studies and notes for this series is from 'The Australian Museum Complete Book of Australian Mammals.' edited by Ronald Strahan. I would hope that these notes were as interesting as I found them.

Elfin (Lyndsay. A. Fink)

1 Opening and Apologies.

Apologies have been received Carol Hall

2 Minutes of previous meeting.

3 Business arising.

4 Correspondence

IN

- 4.1 Geelong FNC: Geelong Naturalist, Aug 1997.
- 4.2 City of Ballarat: Sports organisation survey.
- 4.3 Uniting Church in Australia: National Week of Action for Native Title.
- 4.4 Gould League of Victoria: Catalogue.
- 4.5 Society for growing Australian Plants: Pomonal Native Flower Show, 4&5 October
- 4.6 Donald History and Natural History Group: Spring Campout, 17-19 October 1997-
- 4.7 DCNR: Launch of Ballarat Regional Flora Database.
- 4.8 BEN: Survey of Future Directions.
- 4.9 LINC'S: Minutes of August Meeting.
- 4.10 FNCV: Field Nats News, August 97.
- 4.11 Bendigo FNC: Whirrakkee, Aug 97.
- 4.12 Carol Hall: Postcard from Alaska.
- 4.13 WVFNCA: Future of WVFNCA

5 Business Arising

6 Reports

6.1 Treasurer's Report

Aug- Brought Forward \$ 1,172.60
97

Market Table	\$	9.90	Guest Speaker	\$	5.00
			Expenses		
Total Receipts	\$	9.90	Total Expenditure	\$	5.00
			Balance		\$ 1,177.50

7 General Business

8 Field Reports

9 Excursion Arrangements: Meet at Book City Corner, Sunday 7th September. Morning will be spent at Long Point on Gillies Road. Lunch at St Georges Lake, 12.30 to 1.30pm. Creswick Forest fire area in the afternoon.

10 Syllabus Item: Adam Merrick, Ranger at Mooramong: "Eastern Barred Bandicoot captive breeding program."

11 Supper.

